



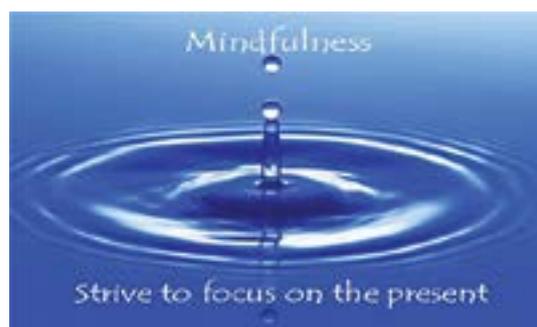
Mindfulness Minute

There are 1,440 minutes in every day. We can all afford to take at least five 60 second breaks in our day to practice mindfulness, increase calm and re-focus. There will still be 1,435 minutes left to fit everything else into! You don't have to be in any particular place with any special equipment or environment to practice this kind of meditation – you can literally do it on the bus, while waiting for the kettle to boil, or even in the bathroom.

You might find it difficult at the start because calm can initially feel like an alien state. Just sitting still for even a few seconds can be nerve-wracking when you are used to the adrenaline buzz of dashing around. It is important to keep going as you will soon get used to it and will get to enjoy the calmness, focus and reduction in stress it brings.

The following exercise takes you through a “Mindfulness Minute”. It is best to start by practicing this in a quiet space and, when you get the hang of it, you can then start to practice it any time, any place, sitting down or standing up.

Take a deep breath in, pushing your belly out as you inhale.
Breathe out, dropping your shoulders as you exhale.
Take another deep breath in, pushing your belly out as you inhale.
Breathe out, dropping your shoulders as you exhale.



Notice any thoughts that come into your head without attaching yourself to them – notice that they are there but do not pay any attention to their content – let them go as you breathe in and out.

Notice the sounds both inside and outside of the room – again, just notice them but do not pay attention to them and let them go as you breathe in and out.

Breathe in calm as you fill your lungs and push your belly out and breathe out stress as you drop your shoulders and relax.

Take another two or three breaths in and out, breathing in calm and breathing out stress, before opening your eyes and slowly reconnecting with the world.

Mindfulness Minute – Where and When



You can use the space below to list the times and places where it would be most useful for you to take a “Mindfulness Minute”. The times may include the start and end of the day, at natural break times during the day such as meal times, just before you are about to start something that poses a challenge to you, or during a challenging time – it’s up to you. Places could be anywhere that you can get some space on your own. This is a very individual thing and there is no best time or place – you need to find a way to fit this into your life in a way that suits you.

Times when I could benefit from a Mindfulness Minute

Places where I could take a Mindfulness Minute





Mindfulness Minute – Where and When

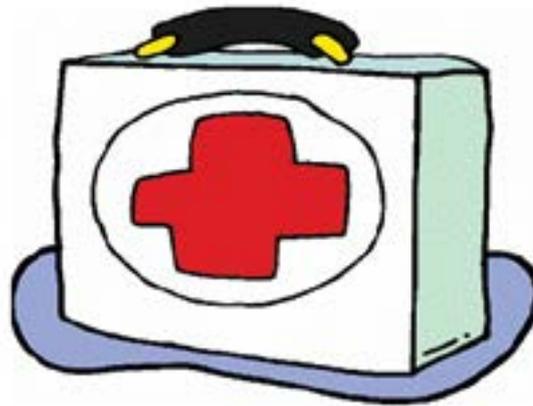
It might be useful, when you are starting to use “Mindfulness Minutes” as a way of bringing calm into your life, to make a contract with yourself to take these 5 minutes every day. You can use the table below at the beginning of the week to make a contract with yourself for the times that you will take these minutes or as a way of recording that you have taken the 5 breaks every day. You can write the time that you plan to take or took each break in the space provided.

	Minute 1	Minute 2	Minute 3	Minute 4	Minute 5
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Mindfulness First Aid Kit

There are times and places in all of our lives where it is more difficult to find calm. During these times, and in these places, it can be useful to have something to support our mindfulness practice.

- Vision
- Taste
- Sound
- Touch
- Smell



You can pick several items that touch each sense but don't pick anything that's too thought-provoking or that triggers very strong emotions. If possible, try to make your kit portable so that you can take it with you if you need to. Think about where you will store it – in a bag, in a drawer, in your pocket etc.



Some suggestions for objects you might include are listed below but you can choose any objects you like as long as they bring you into the present.

- Visual – a pleasant picture – maybe a photo, a postcard, something you cut from a magazine,
- Taste – something you like to taste (preferably something with a long shelf life) e.g. chocolate, a favourite sweet, dried fruit,
- Sound – maybe a song you like, a meditation, an animal noise, a prayer, etc.,
- Touch – pick something with a notable texture or temperature like a stone, a marble or a piece of fabric,
- Smell – pick something you like to smell like coffee beans, an air freshener, perfumed magazine inserts, a tissue sprayed with a favourite perfume/ aftershave.

You can have objects that combine the senses and create a nice ritual, e.g. if you include a tea bag you can smell it first, feel the warm mug as it brews and taste it once it's ready.

The most important thing is that the “Mindfulness First Aid Kit” is personal to you and it should be something that you can use to bring you into the present and to invoke pleasant thoughts and emotions.

You can use the worksheet below to think about what you might include in your own “Mindfulness First Aid Kit”.



My Mindfulness First Aid Kit



Think about what you would like to include in your own “Mindfulness First Aid Kit” and use the space below to record your ideas. Keep in mind the fact that your “Mindfulness First Aid Kit” may need to be portable so that you can bring it with you wherever you go – think about where and how you will store it. You can, of course, change the objects in the kit over time as you come across new things that you would like to include or if you find that some of the things you have included don’t work for you, but this will help you to make a start.

Sense	Possible objects to include
Sight (Visual)	
Taste	
Smell	
Sound	
Touch	





There are a number of other simple things you can do every day to bring mindfulness into your life to help you re-focus and bring more calm into your life.

These don't take a lot of time and are worth practicing even though they can seem artificial or strange at first. After a while, if you continue to practice them, they will just become a natural and enjoyable part of your day.

- Allow yourself to stop, focus on your breathing and notice your body sensations at regular intervals throughout your day. It is amazing the difference that pausing for a couple of seconds and momentarily focusing on your breathing can have on your wellness.
- Pause from time to time during the day and notice your feelings and emotions and the impact they are having on you. This gives you time and space to decide whether it is possible to change them to improve your wellness.
- Take a minute and consciously look at the people and things around you – notice the colours, shapes, textures – this will help to bring you back into the moment when your mind is full of other things.
- When you are walking and find your head full of thoughts that are impacting on your emotions, bring your attention to your feet and how they feel as they hit the ground – walk mindfully, paying attention to the movement of your body and how it interacts with the surface you are walking on.